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SUBJECT: KUFUOR'S TRIP TO ADDIS ABABA

Classified By: CHARGE SUE K. BROWN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On October 10, Chief of State Protocol Ambassador Kobina Wudu told poloff that on President Kufuor's recent trip to Ethiopia, Kufuor met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and paid a courtesy call on German Chancellor Angela Merkel. While most of the trip focused on African Union (AU) issues, bilateral discussions between Kufuor and Zenawi centered on economic matters and adding members to the Peer Review Mechanism. The two also shared a &long8 private lunch in which Somalia was likely discussed in detail. Wudu also suggested that Tanzania would probably assume the Chairmanship of the AU after Ghana. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On October 10, Chief of State Protocol Ambassador Kobina Wudu briefed poloff on President Kufuor's October 4-6 trip to Ethiopia, which followed Kufuor's visit to UNGA and subsequent holiday in the UK. Wudu said the main purpose of Kufuor's visit to Addis Ababa was to be present as African Union (AU) Chair for the visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Kufuor wore his AU hat for most of the visit although he did meet bilaterally with Merkel, Ethiopian President Girma Woldegiorgis, and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Wudu characterized Merkel's trip as a symbol of Africa's importance to Germany and said Germany had signaled that it wants to lend more support to Africa.

¶3. (C) In Kufuor's bilateral meeting with Ethiopian PM Zenawi, Wudu said the discussion centered on Ethiopia's economic development. Wudu opined that Ethiopia is a good model for Ghana to follow and extolled Ethiopia's progress. The two sides also discussed adding more African states to the African Peer Review Mechanism. Wudu said Zenawi invited Kufuor to a private lunch following the bilateral meeting. While Wudu was not privy to details of the &long8 conversation, he said the conversation likely centered on Somalia given Zenawi's &intimate8 knowledge about Somalia. Wudu was highly complimentary of Zenawi throughout the meeting, referring to him as "sharp," "in charge," and "not corrupt."

¶4. (C) Wudu characterized Kufuor's meeting with Merkel as a courtesy call, but said a dinner with Kufuor, Zenawi and Merkel provided some lively discussion. Democratic reforms were discussed, and each side expressed its concern about Darfur and hoped the Hybrid Force would be deployed

before the end of the year. Everyone, Wudu said, was dismayed at the recent attack on peacekeepers in Darfur and Wudu said a Nigerian General told him separately that the Sudanese government was involved in this and other attacks. Wudu said the Ethiopian/Eritrean border dispute remains a serious problem and Ghana is very concerned about it, although nothing was resolved during this visit. He said it is a complex issue, and added that Ethiopia will likely not budge on its position since natural resources are at stake. Wudu, for good measure, added that Eritrea's side to the disagreement is also very important to consider.

15. (C) Noting that Ghana's chairmanship of the African Union (AU) will come to an end early next year, Wudu said that he expects an East African country to take over from Ghana in keeping with the rotation, and suggested Tanzania would assume leadership of the AU. Uganda, Wudu said, is a strong candidate, but it is currently the Commonwealth Chair, which, in Wudu's view, would make it impractical for it to also serve as AU Chair. He dismissed both Kenya and Sudan as candidates.

16. (C) Wudu also reflected on his time as State Protocol Director and said his job and the jobs of many others in government have become and will become much more difficult in this final year of Kufuor's administration. He said he and others receive many more phone and office calls than usual (his waiting room was standing room only) asking for favors, since no one knows who will be in power after the 2008 elections and everyone wants to get what they can now.
BROWN